

FRIENDLY ADVICE

FROM A

MINISTER

TO THE

SERVANTS

OF HIS PARISH.

He that hearkeneth unto Counsel is wise, Prov. xii. 15.

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THIS TRACT
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FRIENDLY ADVICE, &c.

THE Author of this address calls himself your *Friend*, because he wishes you well, and would serve you to the utmost of his power. If he has not silver and gold, such as he has, he freely gives.---He has been taught himself that there are truths more valuable than either, and he would fain teach you the same: *for wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence: but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth LIFE to them that have it**.

I have an easy access to many of those whom you serve, and can remind them of their duty privately, as well as from the pulpit; but some of their servants I have no opportunity of conversing with, and therefore, have composed the present little tract for your use.

* Eccl. vii. 12.

A Minister who rightly regards his situation, feels an affection for every class of his people :---as the spiritual Parent of a large Family, he has a concern for every part of it : ---and as the servant of him who made himself the servant of all, he cannot overlook those who have a name so like his own.

But the service I am endeavouring to render you, will very much depend upon your being *willing* to be served.---There are minds in so unhappy a state that nothing serious or important can gain their attention. If they read at all, they either amuse themselves with trifles, or poison themselves with trash. Such will probably throw away this tract in contempt, if it should fall into their hands. Should it, however, fall into the hand of one more thoughtful, I will endeavour that he shall be repaid for looking it over.

I have been often encouraged when from the pulpit I have met a servant's attentive eye : or when I have seen them listening to a profitable remark while waiting in the parlour :---I have been pleased to meet them at a bookseller's, enquiring for some instructive publication ; and

have been ready to say upon such occasions, *Happy is the man* (whatever be his station) *that getteth understanding, for she is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her**.

The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men that can render a reason†; but the man of understanding will think and listen:--- he will seriously consider the shortness of life, and how stupid and brutish it is to waste it without improvement; much more so to sink it in folly, sensuality, and vice; and instead of making provision for a happy immortality, only lay the ground for bitter repentance.

Thinking persons I say cannot but feel the weight of these considerations, and accordingly they will listen to such hints as they meet with on the subject, and they will improve as they listen.---In this temper, and in this way, some of the first characters for usefulness and respectability have arisen from among servants, agreeable to that scripture, *a wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren*‡.

* Prov. iii. 13. 18

† xxvi. 16.

‡ xvii. 2.

Turn your mind, therefore, to such instruction as Providence shall please to afford you in this or any other way.---It is from a small seed dropt into the ground that the most useful and ornamental productions of the field and garden arise: and a single hint has given rise to a train of thoughts which has formed a new character among men.

And here let me add a caution, namely, that you should be careful not to slight any truth, because some weak person may happen to hold it, or some bad character may chance to defend it; or because it may be spoken to you in a wrong temper, or at an improper season.---It is possible that these very hints may be put into your hand in a way which tends to lessen their good effect.---But recollect that a guinea is exactly of the same value to you in whatever way it is presented.---Regardless of the mind of the giver, you would say, 'gold is gold:---now I only ask that you would, in the same way, reflect that Truth is Truth! and that Truth will serve you where Gold cannot.---*Buy thou, therefore, the Truth, and sell it not* *

* Prov. xxiii. 23.

on any account whatever;---stand by it, and it will stand by thee; for it is GREAT, and shall PREVAIL.

CHAP. II.

The Servant's Interest.

AN all-wise Providence has appointed different stations, and made them dependent on each other; so that the EYE cannot say to the HAND, '*I have no need of thee**.'---It has also made the happiness of each member to depend on the regular performance of its own particular office; so that the eye, while it directs the hand, shall, in return, receive protection from it.---This mutual dependence is intended *that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another*†.

Whatever, therefore, you meet with in this tract, which treats of what you owe to the happiness of your employers, is by no means to be understood, as if the payment would lessen your own stock of happiness.---I mean to shew ra-

* 1 Cor. xii. 21.

† V. 25.

ther that your interests are mutual, and that what promotes your master's comfort, as truly increases your own. A fatherly regard to your true interest ought never to be forgotten either by your Minister or Master; both are bound to remember that *they* also have a Master in heaven, who has commanded them *to love their neighbour as themselves* * : and *to give unto their servants that which is just and equal* †.

It is *just* and *equal* then that faithful service should meet with suitable protection and encouragement.---Neither the laws of God nor man forbid your prudently seeking relief under want, excessive labour, or injuries of any kind. You are justified in quitting a place in which you cannot enjoy health, or obtain reasonable support and comfort.---But prudence requires you to be cautious how you change your place merely for the sake of greater wages. Many a servant has sold health, comfort and character, yea, the safety also of a body and soul for a paltry consideration in money; and learned too late, that one place with small wages, is often

* Matth. xxii. 39.

† Col. iv. 1.

better (all things considered) than another with large.

Much less, let a hasty word, or momentary vexation, throw you out of place.--- This is acting more like a passionate child than a man.--- Whatever you do in a passion, you will repent doing.-----It is always *folly* ; often *madness*. -----“ No government,” says an able writer, “ could subsist for a day, if single errors could “ justify defection.” And we may add, that such as throw up their post for an error’s sake, will probably spend their lives in smarting for their rashness.

In wishing to change your place, you should recollect that every change will bring with it its own inconveniencies and difficulties, and some that you will have no suspicion of, till you feel them.---It is childish to form high expectations of a new thing. People of experience expect but little from the most flattering prospects and proposals. Sin, like a blight, has entered every place, and marred the most pleasant of its fruits and flowers.---If good men, (like Aaron, Eli and David) are obliged to la-

ment that *their house is not so with God** as they wish and earnestly pray for ; what can we expect from the generality of houses ?

You should also never forget that we carry the greatest part of the trouble we complain of, in our own bosoms.---When we wish a change, we, for the most part, are like sick persons, who imagine, that if they could change sides in their bed, they should be easier ;---they turn, but they are still uneasy ; and why ? because they are still sick.---This life was never intended to be the rest of either master or servant, both have their burdens, and the master's is oftentimes the heavier of the two.

The dutiful and pious conduct of some servants towards their indigent relations, should not be forgotten.---I have seen a daughter willing to wear mean clothes, that her aged mother might have some to wear.---I have also seen such conduct blessed with distinguished favour. *Honour, therefore, thy father and thy mother, (which is the first commandment with promise) that it may be well with thee* †.

As reputation in general, is that which gives

* 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

† Eph. vi. 2. 3.

weight and influence to any man ; so the reputation of servants is peculiarly *their* strength.---

A servant with health and character is provided for.---*A good name is better than precious ointment* *.---A silent steadiness, a tried integrity and diligence ; are so essential to the interests of mankind, that no master can be insensible of their value : be assured that the wealthiest and the happiest are so needy, in this respect, that such service must always bear a high price.

Let nothing, therefore, base or false, rob you of that precious jewel, your reputation ;---be honest, diligent, and civil, if it be only out of respect to yourself.---Who is not struck with the answer of that slave, which history records, who standing among others for sale, and being asked by a purchaser, ‘ Wilt thou be faithful if I buy thee ? ’ replied, ‘ *Yes, whether you buy me or not.*’

But character, especially among females, (to whom I now speak) is easily blasted, so as to be irrecoverably lost.---If any consideration can lessen the crime of the villain who attempts to strip you of it, it must be that of his not con-

* Eccl. vii. 1.

sidering the depth of ruin into which he would plunge you.---Should he, however, be cruel enough to neglect the consideration, surely you will not forget, that want of reputation, and the despair which attends it, fill our streets with Prostitutes, murdering at once body and soul.

Depend upon it, that he who would dishonour you, has no sincere affection for you; and the moment you suffer him to pass the bounds of the strictest decorum, he must lose even his *respect* for you: that very respect upon which alone a true and constant regard is built.

Your safety partly consists in being aware of your danger. Detect ruin in its first approaches: understand its smiling aspect, and plausible pretence: particularly avoid dangerous occasions: and whatever you find likely to deprive you of your resolution. They have made but little observation on their own hearts, that have not learned how weak their reasons and resolutions are in the moment of temptation; and therefore that their safety lies in making a *timely* escape---that is to say an *immediate* one.

To speak more generally, bad company is so mischievous, that when a young servant is observed to be entering into it, every person of compassion and discernment recoils at the sight, as at seeing a sheep enter the slaughter-house. ---Who that has seen any thing of life does not know the mischief of a vicious conversation and example?---What will not such an unprincipled tongue dare to assert?---What so sacred that does not serve it for a jest?-----What character or service will it not teach others to despise?---What corrupt maxim or vain project will it not recommend?---I have known a short conversation quite unhinge a sober mind. ---I have observed, a few hints plant disorder and wretchedness in a once contented breast, that could never afterwards be rooted out. I have even been surprised to find how soon a bad example would transform one that has been long humble, diligent and conscientious, into the very reverse.

In a word, such a tongue is, indeed, *an unruly evil*, and *full of deadly poison* * ; and the danger is the greater, because the poison is of-

* James iii. 8.

ten mixed with something curious and entertaining ; or it is presented under the notion of friendship : the venom thus sweetened, creeps into the heart, before even its danger is suspected.---But beware of this deadly cup, as you prize your safety:---the more pleasing you find it, the more dangerous it is.---The best advice here, is that which comes from the highest authority. *Avoid it ; pass not by it ; turn from it, and pass away* *.

I think I ought not to omit warning you of the snare which attends *Gaming*, or adventuring in Lotteries. Covetousness lies at the root of it ; and a discontent with that provision which God has already made for us. It is he who has placed us in our different stations, and bids each to *take heed and beware of covetousness* †, and depend for our support upon him who clothes the lilies and feeds the birds.---And so far from encouraging a man in those crooked paths which lead to wasting, and sometimes to stealing, He charges him to *labour, working with his hands the thing which is*

* Prov. iv. 15.

† Luke xii. 15.

good, that he may have to give (even though he is but a labourer) to him that needeth.*

Many honest and prosperous servants, led away by the puffing proposals of gain, which are every where to be met with, would think a real Friend was romancing if he should give them an account of the distresses, frauds, lies, and other desperate steps to which such projects often lead; and which sometimes end, not only in the loss of character, but even of life.---Such an account, I say, might surprise those who know but little of the world, and the effect of its gilded baits; but is this account any thing more than what has actually happened again and again?---And if we often *bear* of such things, how many more evils of this sort may we reasonably suppose there are of which we never hear?

But it is with Gaming as with most other bad habits: it advances a step at a time:---the first step is thought to be innocent and safe; the next is not considered as very dangerous; the third (however dangerous) is yet deemed in present circumstances absolutely necessary;

* Eph. iv. 28.

till at length the deluded adventurer awakes, as from a dream, to reflect (but too late) upon his folly and his ruin.

If I have said nothing of *swearing, drunkenness, indecency, violence, &c. &c.* it is merely because such vices are too gross and scandalous to need exposing in such a tract as this.---Who that commits these crimes does not, (upon reflection) feel ashamed of them?---There are, however, some considerations at the end of the book, to which such an unhappy character would do well to take heed before it is too late. For *he that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy* *.

I am obliged now to turn from considerations which more particularly relate to your private concerns, to those which belong to your engagement.

But before we enter upon the next chapter, let us seriously resolve to seek his blessing upon these hints, “from whom (as our church expresses it) “all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed;---that

* Prov. xxix. 1.

“ we who cannot do any thing that is good
 “ without him, may by him be enabled to
 “ live according to his will, through Jesus
 “ Christ our Lord. *Amen.*”

CHAP. III.

A Master's Reasonable Expectation.

HE who foresaw the infinite variety of disputable cases which would arise, and which no body of laws, however extensive, could reach : when “ he visited us in great humility,” left a rule so comprehensive, that it may be applied to every case ; and at the same time so easy, that the meanest capacity may apply it.

ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER YE WOULD THAT
 MEN SHOULD DO UNTO YOU, DO YE EVEN SO
 TO THEM : FOR THIS IS THE LAW AND THE
 PROPHETS *.

As our claim upon others depends so much upon our *rendering to all their dues* †, (as tribute, to whom tribute is due ; custom, to whom

* Matth. vii. 12.

† Rom. xiii. 7.

custom ; fear, to whom fear ; and honour, to whom honour) : it is my duty to state to you some of those services which those you live with have a right to claim. And, as the first step to our rightly performing our part, is to *know* it, I shall select the rule above-mentioned as our *measuring-rod*.---I shall put this standard into your own hand, and observe, that in order to your using it, you have only to suppose, that Providence had appointed you to *govern* instead of to serve ; you will then perceive what you would reasonably have claimed from those servants over whom you were placed.

Would you not expect while you fulfilled your engagements with them, that they should also fulfil their engagements to you, namely, to yield you both faithful and *cheerful* service ? bearing with those infirmities in you which are common to human nature ?---Would you not expect them to be honest, not only in larger matters, but that they should not watch opportunities to purloin in *smaller* ?---Would you deem it upright if they listened to your *private conversation* ?---If they examined your

private papers ?---if they wasted or made away with your substance? or your *time* ?--- In a word, would you not say, real honesty will do nothing which fears a discovery, or which needs secret opportunities, or concealments.

For a master pays his servant as much for *time* and *care*, as his tradesmen for goods ; and while his property is liable to be attacked in a variety of ways, he employs servants, like so many watchmen to defend it.---But how hard would you deem it to be betrayed by your guards ?---To have the very staff upon which you leaned, not only fail, but pierce you ?---To have a servant idle when you particularly needed his activity? and wasting that which is often provided with difficulty ?---How would you feel his carelessness, when much depended on his care? and if he were at the same time too proud and impatient to receive either reproof or instruction ?---With what grief would you observe him chusing the very connections which you had forbidden ?---forming a separate interest, yea, a sort of conspiracy against you and your family? and seeking wretched pre-

tences to justify absolute injuries? I cannot doubt but that you would propose your rule, as an end to all debate :---You would bid him honestly ask his own heart, ‘ How *he* would like such treatment ?’

The same may be said of the abuse of horses : not to mention the baseness of ill-treating a generous creature who cannot complain, and who while he stands patient under repeated injuries, stands also ready to strain every nerve to please his cruel abuser ;---how would you feel if *your* servant thus treated a horse you valued ?

Let such an abuser also ask himself how *he* would feel to live constantly under the lash of an unfeeling tyrant who either has no meaning in his abuse, or who takes no pains to make his meaning understood ?---under one who may have any thing done by gentle methods, but who makes choice of cruel ones ?---and one who by repeating his cruelties, has so hardened himself that it becomes difficult to convince him that he is cruel ?

Again, would you not expect that while your property was secured, and your interest

consulted in other respects, that the character of yourself and your family should be equally secure?---Apply the rule again, and enquire what *you* would think of a servant who scrupled not to expose your weakness to any one who would be mean enough to hear the tale? ---what would you say to those who collected and retailed every fault or misfortune in your family; especially when mistated, and presented only on the unfavourable side?---I am persuaded their taking away your purse would not leave so unfavourable an impression upon your mind.

I have said nothing here of inventing absolute falsehoods, because I am not speaking to the abandoned but to the *inconsiderate* :---to such as do not consider that to speak only half the truth is often a lie, and that the truth itself may be so injurious, that nothing can justify its being spoken, but when greater injuries must follow upon our silence.

Once more, you would not only require your servant to be honest, sober, and careful of your property, interest, and character; but you would reasonably expect attention as to

the *manner* of your being served.---You must be conscious how much satisfaction depends upon the spirit and temper of the person serving, and how very offensively a command may be obeyed: infomuch, that obedience in the act, may be accompanied with perfect rebellion in the *manner*. You know if *you* receive assistance in a fullen, careless, or impertinent way, you had rather be without such service. You must also be sensible that if every trifle be made a subject of debate or contention, no family can be at peace. Providence has appointed some to govern, and others to serve, as different members of the same body; and when this order is not cheerfully submitted to, there must ensue strife, confusion, and every evil work.

Thus I have mentioned some instances as examples of trying the rule or standard of right; but innumerable instances beside these might be mentioned, and will daily arise, to which the rule is equally applicable. If, therefore, vicious companions attempt to make wrong appear right, or to think very little of the wrong; recollect you have a rule at hand which will exactly suit the case; and easily de-

termine what is *your* duty : for no wrong conduct in others can possibly excuse what is wrong in us.

A confiderate master will not, indeed, rigorously exact his claims : he will know human nature too well to expect more than imperfect service from imperfect creatures.---The errors he marks in his own course, the passions which disturb his own bosom, and the *ten thousand talents* he hereby owes to his Lord, will teach him to avoid so great a mistake as that of angrily *taking his servant by the throat, saying, ' Pay me that thou owest * !'*---But the more generously he refrains from *demanding* all his due, the more ready should you be to *pay* it. Yea, with a generosity like his own, exact it from yourself.---And depend upon it that if you possess such real worth, sooner or later your worth will be felt and acknowledged ; however low your present situation, or discouraging your prospects.

* Matth. xviii. 28.

C H A P. IV.

Fellow-Servants.

I COME in this chapter to drop a few hints respecting the temper you should cultivate towards your FELLOW-SERVANTS: and your living well with them, depends much upon the regard you pay to the same general rule, of *doing as you would be done by.*

The jealousies and animosities which arise from the merest trifle, and throw a large family into confusion and party rage, are scarcely to be conceived by those who have not seen them---Like a single spark, which struck by accident, and falling upon combustible matter, will lay a whole town in ashes.---In order, therefore, to live in peace, you must not only be peaceably disposed, but, as the apostle expresses it, you must *SEEK peace and PURSUE it* * ---that is, as men pursue an object upon which their heart is set. Often have we heard complaints stated with greater plausibility by one

* 1 Pet. iii. 11.

party, and thought the injury to be very great, till the other side was heard. If, therefore, you suppose (which is very common) that the grievance lies chiefly, if not entirely with your fellow-servant, put yourself in his place, and you will, perhaps, begin to discover your mistake.

Let me particularly exhort you to make an ingenious confession of error as soon as you discover it. Never think you degrade yourself by taking the side of truth, whenever, or with whomsoever it appears.---You never pretended to be infallible, why then be so backward to acknowledge an error?---To convince my adversary is gaining a victory over him, but to confess my mistake is to gain one over *myself*.---In a word, it is often the only method left us of doing away a fault :---it is the way to rise by a fall :---it is an opportunity of seizing the approbation of another's mind :---it silences his future blame ; and often overcomes evil with good.

History mentions an exemplary character, who went to his enemy, and said, ' Shall we never be reconciled till we become a table-

‘ talk to all the country ?’---And when his enemy agreed to reconciliation, ‘ Remember,’ said he, ‘ that though I was both the elder, ‘ and the superior, I fought first to thee !’--- ‘ True,’ replied the other, ‘ I every way feel ‘ my inferiority ; for I began the quarrel, and ‘ thou the reconciliation.’

One of the worst characters that enters a house is *the whisperer, which separateth chief friends* *. But I pray you, understand me here ! By a whisperer, I cannot mean one who feels himself bound to give notice of wrongs he cannot otherwise prevent : no ; I mean a wanton or malicious sower of strife.---I hope you will consider the injustice and cruelty of such a practice ; and recollect, none despises the tale-bearer more than those who listen to the tale ; and that *with what measure ye mete, it will* (in one way or other) *be measured to you again* †.

In a word, whether we regard masters or servants, we live in a world which has so many sharp points and critical stations, that our own comfort, as well as that of those we live

* Prov. xvi. 28.

† Matth. vii. 2.

with, is made to turn upon mutual kindness, forbearance, accommodation, and dependence ; in want of these we are condemned to bear the lash of continual discord, and are made our own tormentors.

The least consideration will inform us, how easy it is to put an ill-natured construction upon a word ; and what perverse turns and expressions spring from an evil temper ;---nothing can be explained to him who will not understand ; nor will any thing appear right to the unreasonable.---“ Every thing in life,” says one of the ancients, “ has two handles ;” but it must be a bad disposition, indeed, which will be ever seizing the wrong one.

I therefore repeat it, that if you would *have* comfort, you must *give* it. It is no uncommon thing to hear the very persons who throw a family into confusion, complain that there is no peace in the family. But he that would escape the calamity of fire, must be careful not to strike the sparks which enkindle it.

The only remedy for all these evils is true religion. This (as far as it is embraced) *brings glory to God, peace on earth, and good-will to-*

wards men *---The slightest acquaintance with the doctrine and example of our Saviour, must convince every unprejudiced mind of their holy and heavenly tendency : and the *tendency* of this religion is a sufficient proof that it came from heaven, and leads to it again, if no other proof could be given.

From whence come wars and fightings among us, but from the want of that mind our master possessed and recommended ?---Such a mind would put an end to those bickerings and jealousies which render families so wretched.---Christianity teaches us to suffer ills, not to inflict them ; and to give *good measure, and running over*, rather than nicely to consider what was *agreed for*.

But whatever price we pay for peace, it must never be purchased at the expence of *Truth*.---The quiet of some persons is little more than a state of confederacy, or agreement in wrong sentiments and bad practices. As it is my duty to warn you of whatever is wrong in general, let me add, that there is nothing wrong in

* Luke ii 14.

the character of man, which a serious reader of his Bible will not find described, together with its danger and remedy.

Let me also remind you to value and improve your *Time* ; for, as somebody has observed, "it is with our time as with our money, " a good husband makes a little go a great " way."---Spare minutes, taken care of, turn to great account at the year's end.---Waste not then the leisure you have (especially on the Sunday) in so wretched and unprofitable a manner as many do ; but gather up your fragments of time for present improvement and eternal happiness ; and endeavour in improving opportunities, to imitate a great character of former times, who when almost expiring, he heard some persons discoursing in a low tone of voice, said, '*Speak out, that I may learn something more before I die !*'

CHAP. V.

Religion.

I HAVE hitherto spoken principally on those subjects which relate to your comfort and character in this world : I should, however,

perform but a small part of my duty, and but ill fulfil the profession of a friend, were I to confine my advice only to the present moment. To give a man direction for travelling *comfortably* is worth something ; but how insufficient will this be, if we neglect to point out the *right road* in which he is to travel ?---Even a rough and dreary way, which leads to our father's house, is far better than a smooth and pleasant path which leads to the abode of an enemy.

I come, therefore, to speak on the subject of that religion which I mentioned at the conclusion of the last chapter ; and which is no other than a state of friendship with God,---which raises a high and lively expectation in our hearts on the security of his own truth,---which brings present *life and peace* *, and, like a river, refreshes and fertilizes every place through which it flows.

Religion, moreover, particularly invites your regard, as it is a blessing common to the rich and poor.---“ It is at church that the poor “ man lifts up his head.” Providence has

* Rom. viii. 6.

appointed many distinctions in other things, all which a Christian is satisfied with on this very account, that as they are but transient in themselves, so they are appointed of God for wise purposes : but in the grand and eternal concern, you have the same privileges and promises which are proposed to your master.---For as the natural Sun shines into the room of the meanest servant with the same splendour and warmth as into the master's, so the *Sun of Righteousness* ariseth, without any respect of persons, upon their hearts.

Left, however, you should fall into the more common mistakes about our religion ; or lest you should be led away by any dangerous heresy of the day, and make shipwreck of that faith for which our reformers so earnestly strove and willingly bled ; I intreat your attention while I discourse farther on a subject which in its importance infinitely exceeds every other. *For the things which are seen are temporal ; but the things which are not seen are eternal **

* 2 Cor. iv. 18.

perform but a small part of my duty, and but ill fulfil the profession of a friend, were I to confine my advice only to the present moment. To give a man direction for travelling *comfortably* is worth something ; but how insufficient will this be, if we neglect to point out the *right road* in which he is to travel ?---Even a rough and dreary way, which leads to our father's house, is far better than a smooth and pleasant path which leads to the abode of an enemy.

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* Rom. viii. 6.

appointed many distinctions in other things, all which a Christian is satisfied with on this very account, that as they are but transient in themselves, so they are appointed of God for wise purposes : but in the grand and eternal concern, you have the same privileges and promises which are proposed to your master.---For as the natural Sun shines into the room of the meanest servant with the same splendour and warmth as into the master's, so the *Sun of Righteousness* ariseth, without any respect of persons, upon their hearts.

Lest, however, you should fall into the more common mistakes about our religion ; or lest you should be led away by any dangerous heresy of the day, and make shipwreck of that faith for which our reformers so earnestly strove and willingly bled ; I intreat your attention while I discourse farther on a subject which in its importance infinitely exceeds every other. *For the things which are seen are temporal ; but the things which are not seen are eternal **

* 2 Cor. iv. 18.

Christianity, then, is more than a reputable *profession*, a just *notion*, or a regular *form*, however valuable these may be in themselves: to mistake it for these, is like mistaking an image for a man; or the *shadow* of any thing for the thing itself.---It is more than an *outward reformation*; for this is but lopping off the branches of a bad tree, while the root remains to shoot afresh.

It is also more than *doing our duty towards one another*; for to stop here, would be like regarding your fellow-servants while you forgot your *master*.---Yea, we shall fall short of our mark, if we only regard what we are to *do for our great MASTER himself*; since the gospel principally discovers what HE HATH DONE *for us*; and this discovery is declared to be of such importance, that our eternal state depends upon the regard we pay to it*.

If, indeed, our religion were not more than some moralists teach, the figurative atonements made before Christ came, and the *real* one he made on the cross, would not only be an immense, but unnecessary expence; and the pro-

* Mark xvi. 15, 16.

mise of a *divine spirit* and a *new heart* *, unaccountable.---On the other hand, the cross of Christ, and the promise of his Spirit, point out the depth of that ruin into which sin has plunged us :---they shew, that *without shedding of blood there is no remission* † :---and, that without such a repentance or change of mind takes place in the sinner, as may be compared to his being *born again*, *he cannot see the kingdom of God* ‡.

To speak as plainly as I can on such a subject, Christianity sets forth the benefits which fallen creatures derive from a Redeemer, who is no less than *GOD manifest in the flesh* || : and these benefits consist in that which he wrought FOR them, and that which he works IN them. ---At the same time it discovers that, *without him, they can do nothing* for themselves ¶.

Who, in this respect, *hath believed our report* ? and *to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed* ? For us (if, indeed, we are his disciples) he *grew up as a tender plant* ; for us *he was despised and rejected of men* ; and after

* Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

† Heb. ix. 22.

‡ John iii. 3.

|| 1 Tim. iii. 16.

¶ John xv. 5.

speaking to our case as man never spake, and performing such wonders as man never wrought, *our iniquity was laid upon him*, and he was *brought as a lamb to the slaughter*.---There, for us men, and for our salvation, *it pleased the LORD to bruise him*, and to make his soul an *offering for sin* *.---FOR us also *he gave himself* †: and *bore our sins in his own body on the tree* ‡, ---*the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God* ||. And, having DIED for us, for us also he ROSE, *leading captivity captive*, and receiving GIFTS for men ¶.

But it was not only FOR US he did this; he also sends these purchased gifts INTO our hearts: ---It is IN US that he sets up his *kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost* **.---It is IN us he works repentance, faith, hope, and love, and all those genuine *fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God* ††.---This is that *life of God* in the soul of man which is the earnest and foretaste of life eternal.---And this our Lord has taught us to expect we shall as really and

* Isa. liii. 1.---10. † Titus ii. 14. ‡ 1 Pet. ii. 24.

|| iii. 18. ¶ Eph. iv. 8. ** Rom. xiv. 17. †† Phil. i. 11

actually derive from himself, and receive into our hearts, as the *branch* really and actually receives life, sap or nourishment, from the *Vine* to which it is united *.

As he sat on the well discoursing with a woman of Samaria, he taught the same truth by another figure when he said, ‘ *If thou knewest the GIFT OF GOD, and who it is that saith to thee, “ Give me drink ;” thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee LIVING WATER. Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again : but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst ; but the water that I shall give him shall be IN him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life †.* ’ Accordingly in the great day of the feast, Jesus stood, and again proclaimed his best gift ; and promised to every thirsty soul a spring of divine and eternal life, derived, indeed, from himself, but to spring up IN the heart of the believer.---And lest his meaning should not be comprehended by every one, the evangelist adds, *this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him shall receive ‡.*

* John xv. 4. † John iv. 10, 13, 14. ‡ John vii. 37---39.

Thus securing us from all we *fear*, and supplying us with all we *need*, he becomes completely our SAVIOUR.

Let me further hint, that by attending to these principles, you will be enabled to detect the more plausible errors you meet with.---Examine when a doctrine is presented, whether it does not tend to oppose, or to *explain away* one or other of these two branches of Christianity: either what Christ does FOR the sinner by the merit of his blood; or what he does IN the sinner by the power of his Spirit.

I cannot, indeed, in a few words, convey a more plain and scriptural account of these truths, than in the following short extract from the articles of the Church of England: which maintains, that “there is a fault and corruption in the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of *Adam*; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil*.”---It further declares, that “the condition of man after the fall of *Adam* is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good

* Article ix.

“ works to faith, and calling upon God, having no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without his grace *.”

Do you ask upon what foundation we can now stand before God? the answer is, upon that only which he himself hath laid: for “ we are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; by faith, and not for our own works and doings †.”

Do you further ask, ‘ of what value then are these works of ours, since they cannot justify us before God?’ The Church well replies, “ Albeit that good works, which are the fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God’s judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ; and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith; insomuch, that by them a lively Faith may be as evidently known, as a tree discerned by the fruit †.”

If this be Christianity, let the reader stop

* Article x.

† Article xi.

‡ Article xii.

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* Article x.

† Article xi.

‡ Article xii.

and enquire what he knows of it.---Let him seriously reflect on the course of his life ; on his views and his hopes ;---that is, let him honestly examine his heart, and consider whether he has not been hitherto wandering far from the ways and counsel of God ? Undone, as we must be, till we find out our condition as transgressors of a holy law, and discover a hope of mercy *through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus*, yet with what unconcern are these great points treated !---Though we naturally wander like lost sheep, who among us has actually returned to *the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls* ? And yet (strange to say) who does not expect to be considered as a Christian ?---*Lord, what is Man that thou shouldest be thus mindful of him ?* and what is man that he should be so unmindful of Thee---and of himself ?

For full satisfaction on these and less important points in religion, search the scriptures.---It is our Lord's own direction * :---and it is recorded to the honour of some people at Berea, that they were *more noble* than those in

* John v. 39.

Thessalonica, not only in *that they received the word with all readiness of mind*, but that instead of listening to senseless prejudice and rash opposition like their neighbours, *they searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so**.---

Let me entreat you to imitate the nobler mind of this ingenuous people, especially as your Bible contains not only these leading truths, but a variety of examples, directions, and encouragements, connected with them.---It not only leads, but animates : it not only discovers, but supports : and, therefore, is to be the constant *Lamp to your feet, and Light to your paths* † :---the Staff upon which you are to lean every step of your way.

My design in mentioning these truths, is to remind the members of our Church of their principles : to place the feet of the inexperienced in the ancient track ; and to put them upon their guard.---For want of caution, and some assistance at first setting out, well meaning people have been miserably perplexed and discouraged in their course, or drawn aside

* Acts xvii. 11.

† Ps. cxix. 105.

by seducers.---For while men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares. *

CHAP. VI.

Prejudices.

FROM what has been stated, it plainly appears that Religion is a lively tree, bearing heavenly fruits; *the planting of the Lord, in which he will be glorified*†; his noblest, and most expensive work. It is no wonder, then, that the great adversary of God and man should be ever raising prejudices against it:---not, indeed, against the *form*, but against the *power* of godliness. Among other objections which I have not room to mention, none is more common than that which represents serious religion as the death of *happiness*, and the grave of *business*; and, of this, you will not fail to have certain instances pointed out as proofs.

But those instances are impositions:---they are not the effects of true religion, but of the

* Matt. xiii. 25.

† Isa. lxi. 3.

reverse; for *the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance**---Are these terms for wretchedness? or are these fruits likely to produce it?

A penitent, indeed, like the *Sailor*, may, upon being awakened to a sense of his danger, express this sense with terror, and anxiously cry out, *What must I do to be saved* †? and a backslider, like *Peter*, cut to the heart with a sense of his ingratitude, may for a while seek a retreat where he may go aside to *weep bitterly*. There is a season of correction, a *time to mourn* ‡, which, like a dark cloud to the husbandman, is generally followed by a fruitful season.---What wisdom would there have been in any of us, if we had never known sorrow?---but though such a *weeping endureth for a night, joy cometh in the morning* ||.---A true, solid, abiding satisfaction; liable, indeed, like every thing below, to interruptions, but such as a man feels upon the recovery of his health through a salutary though painful course

* Gal. v. 22, 23.

† Acts xvi. 30.

‡ Eccl. iii. 4.

|| Ps. xxx. 5.

of medicine.---No one ever deemed such an one *unhappy*, because he underwent some pain in order to a sound cure.

A Christian of a peevish or melancholy turn may be found ; but like a tree without its proper fruit, though he may be alive, he is not well.---We are not allowed to call him a *dead* or *bad* tree, because he does not flourish for the present season ; but, for the same reason, we cannot say he is an healthy one :---or, in another view such a Christian is yet a *child*, and therefore imperfect in measure ; he is also at school, and has not thoroughly learned his lesson.

True religion is the life, health and education of the soul ; and whoever truly possesses it, is strengthened with peculiar encouragement for every good word and work.---Surely, if any thing can warm and animate the heart of man, and enable him to bear up under difficulties, it must be an assurance that *the eternal God is his refuge*, and that *the everlasting arms are underneath him* * :---that *all things shall work together for his good* † ; and that his

* Deut. xxxiii. 27.

† Rom. viii. 28.

light affliction, which is but for a moment, shall work for him, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory *.---Admitting that other men have their hopes and joys, can they be compared with these? *Their comforts depend upon their corn and wine, and oil increasing, but a believer can say, ' though the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, and the labour of the olive shall fail, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation* †.

I intreat you, therefore, henceforward to consider religion as the true spring of solid happiness:---it consistently bids its disciples to *rejoice always* ‡, because it affords them matter for rejoicing under the loss of all things, “ in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment.”

As to the article of *business*, what is a religious man not prepared for, that he can be called to? The *fear* of God fits him to be entrusted: the *favour* of God raises and animates his expectations: the *promise* of God supports him

* 2 Cor. iv. 17.

† Hab. iii. 17, 18.

‡ Phil. iv. 4.

under difficulties : the *word* of God gives general direction to his steps ; and the *blessing* of God attends them.---You shall, however, not take my word for this :---you shall see the fact.

Compare any irreligious servant, with that servant of *Abraham* , whose character is recorded in Gen. xxiv. What an holy acquaintance had this man formed with his God !---what reliance on his providence !---what fidelity to his master !---what diligence !---what real dignity of character, though in service !--- *He ruled over all that Abraham had, but forgot not that he was still Abraham's servant.* ---Entrusted with a business of the last importance, he conducted it as his own ; or, as the apostle speaks, ‘ *with singleness of heart, as unto the Lord ** .’---As he approached the place of his business, *he made the camels to kneel down without the city, by a well of water* : and knowing from whom all our help cometh, he said, ‘ *O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master.* ’---Upon observing signs of

* Eph. vi. 5.

success in answer to his prayer, *he blesses the God of his master* ; and upon his business being successfully concluded, he again *worships the Lord* ;---transacting his concerns more with God than with man, and mixing prayer with praise in every stage of it.

Nor suppose that he was less diligent, because he was so devout :---*servent in spirit*, he was not *slothful in business* *.---An idle enthusiast may disgrace religion, and a real Christian may have his faults ; but religion itself is the friend of business :---it directs it ;---it transacts it honourably ;---it generally secures success to it.---Doing business with diligence and truth, appears to have been a part of this man's religion.---*He and the men that were with him, tarried that night ; and they arose up in the morning, and he said, ' Send me away unto my master.'*---And when the brother and the mother of the damsel whom he had sought in marriage for his master's son, would have detained him a few days, *he said unto them, ' Hinder me not, ' seeing the Lord hath prospered my way : send me away, that I may go to my master.'*

* Rom. xii. 11.

Now compare, as I said, the wisdom and worth of this servant of God, with the folly and falshood of such a Slave to gold as Gehazi†; and you will perceive, that when Christ said, ‘*Take my yoke†*,’ (or enter into my service), he shewed us the only way to Freedom, Usefulness, Happiness, or *Rest*.

Great excellence, indeed, in any station, has always been rare; nor should the characters I am about to mention, merely as *Models* for imitation, be made standards to measure others by, or become occasions of discouragement to any.---Such comparisons would be odious;---many who are truly sincere as Christians, and valuable as servants, fall short of others in certain respects:---our Lord calls that ground good which brought forth but *thirty*, though some others produced *sixty* and an *hundred* fold ||.---Yet excellence is not confined to any age; and servants, like Abraham’s, may be found even in this.

Some years ago I became acquainted with a servant, whom I shall call LUCIUS: one who,

† 2 Kings v. † Mat. xi. 29. || Mat. xiii. 23.

knowing the human heart in its deceitfulness and depravity *, stood, indeed, before his God, like the publican, *smiting upon his breast* ; but before his Master he stood with an integrity and diligence, which his master had long observed, and which at length gained his entire confidence.---Lord *** thought and talked of Christianity, like many more who have it yet to learn ; but he was constrained to admire its effects in his servant LUCIUS. He saw in him evident marks of the fear of God ; the consolations of the gospel ; the truth it enjoins, and the devotion it inspires. But while he beheld all this as a singular matter of fact, maintained and exercised in a house like his, he was equally struck in observing, that LUCIUS was one of the most humble and attentive of his domestics ; and no less eminent as a servant, than as a saint.---The unbelieving Lord (for who can change the heart, but God only ?) continued while he lived, to advance and vindicate the Christian servant ; and dying bequeathed a solid testimony to his virtues.

* Jer. xvii. 9.

*Them that honour God he will honour**, and he will send the honour by what hand he pleases.

To LUCIUS the servants also looked as to a common friend or brother: he instructed them; he assisted them; he reconciled them; he was their example; and, if there were any more foolish and profligate than the rest, he had the honour of their reproach.---I need only to add, that I mention this fact, as well as the former, to shew how honourable a part such servants sustain in society;---to shew that true religion is the same in every age;---to exhibit the fruits of genuine Christianity, wherever it is found; ---and to encourage servants to higher aims than they usually entertain.

* 1 Sam. ii. 30.

CHAP. VII.

Piety encouraged.

AS those who have been awakened to a serious regard for their salvation are likely to be among the first who take up such a tract as this, their character ought to be particularly remembered in it; for their dangers, as well as their privileges, are peculiar: throughout this chapter, therefore, I speak to such only.

And let me affectionately intreat you, my Christian friends, *to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, with all lowliness and meekness* *.-----While you are the servants of God, be careful never to forget that he has appointed you to be also the servants of *Man*. ---One duty should never be opposed to another duty :---Our religion teaches us to *adorn* our station, not to forget it.---Beware, therefore, of the error of those, who upon taking up a re-

* Eph. iv. 1, 2:

ligious profession, have become conceited, forward, and unmindful of that order and decorum which God has appointed for the well being of society.

Instead of disgusting your master by such a conduct, endeavour by every lawful mean (but by no other whatever) to secure a place in his esteem, as well as in his house; and in order to this, let your diligence be as his right hand, and your care as his right eye.---Study his temper, and his interest, and your own will be studied at the same time.

*A certain Centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick, and ready to die; and when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him to come and heal his servant**.---You may here remark, how dear a servant may render himself to his employer; and how God causes one good office to be repaid by another.

But I will come nearer home:--**LYDIA** is the servant of a small family, whose mistress I lately visited after a long illness.---‘Sir,’ said

* Luke vii. 2, 3.

she, ' the girl who has just left the room is a
 ' greater comfort to me than I can express.---
 ' She watches me with the affection of a daugh-
 ' ter, and the care of a nurse. When my com-
 ' plaints make me peevish, she contrives some-
 ' thing to sooth me. I often observe her tak-
 ' ing pains to discover what would add to my
 ' comfort, and often am presented with the
 ' thing I wish for, before I express it in words.
 ' I live without suspicion, for I perceive her to
 ' be conscientious even to scrupulosity :---my
 ' chief complaint is, that she takes so much care
 ' of me, that I cannot make her take sufficient
 ' care of herself.'

' I have observed,' said I, ' her attention at
 ' church, as well as when waiting upon you.'

' My servant,' continued she, ' is a Christian,
 ' and, in my late distress, afforded me her
 ' prayers as well as her tears.-----Her parents
 ' were too poor to give her any education; but
 ' she has taught herself to read, and frequent-
 ' ly reads the Scriptures to me. Now and then,
 ' while she is reading, her heart is too full to
 ' be quite silent on the passage; and then she

‘ drops an expression or two, accompanied with
 ‘ such simplicity and meaning, as bring to my
 ‘ mind those words, *I thank thee, O Father,*
 ‘ *Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid*
 ‘ *these things from the wise and prudent, and*
 ‘ *hast revealed them unto babes**.---In short, I
 ‘ esteem her one of the most valuable gifts I
 ‘ ever received from an indulgent Providence,
 ‘ and never could have supposed that so much
 ‘ of my comfort depended on the faithfulness
 ‘ and care of a poor servant.’

After saying some things to encourage this
 worthy girl, as I passed her in going away, I
 could not help saying also to myself, ‘ How
 ‘ much better do these retired virtues deserve
 ‘ recording, than those splendid mischiefs which
 ‘ historians call up all their eloquence to a-
 ‘ dorn !’

But to return : Are you in prosperous cir-
 cumstances ? be careful lest you forget Him
 who placed you in them ; and lest you abuse
 these advantages to the dishonour of your best
 Friend.---Often recollect that you keep your

* Luke x. 21.

present station during his pleasure ; and consider with pious *Nebemiah*, that every heart is in his hand, and every gift at his disposal.

And here, by the way, is another instance of a man who found that earthly business is never so well conducted as by heavenly wisdom. He had a most arduous undertaking before him, but, with God for his helper, he despaired not of success.---He requested his master that he might be permitted to pursue his undertaking, but secretly looked to God alone for the answer he was to receive : while he presented wine to the King, he worshipped a greater King ; even one who, he knew, *turns the hearts of Kings, as the rivers of water* *.---Bitter enemies opposed him ; but a man like *Nebemiah* always knows what to do with his enemies ; he puts them into God's hand, while he walks wisely and uprightly before them.---Admirable was his conduct, when he found some (whom they might call of his own sect) acting amiss ; with an holy indignation he testified against their abuses, though they were engaged with him in

* Prov. xxi. 1.

the same general design ;---he expected no success but in the way of righteousness, and in this way he found it.

Let us thank God that he hath given such examples as these for every station in life, and then let us beg for grace to imitate them.

Should your present station be discouraging, trust God and act uprightly, and you shall succeed at length, even beyond your expectations. I may encourage every pious servant, as ELISHA did the young man that served him, *'Fear not : for they that be with us, are more than they that be with them*'*.---It was in a patient, faithful service, under hard treatment, that Jacob found a friend to plead his cause, which his master could not but notice. *'I have learned, said Laban by experience, that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake†'*.---The blessing of Abraham was the portion of Jacob, and, we are assured, shall be equally the portion of every Christian, to the end of time ; for if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise ‡.

* 2 Kings vi. 16.

† Gen. xxx. 27.

‡ Gal. iii. 29.

Read what a train of difficulties *Joseph* had to encounter :---hated by his brethren; falsely accused by his mistress; and imprisoned for his integrity---Still, like *the moon walking in brightness*, he continued to shine through a disastrous night; securely relying on him *who cannot lie*; and who promises to make *all things work together for good, to them that love him* *.

Affliction is a school in which a good man learns not only to be wise, but in the end to be thankful. I have somewhere read of a poor servant or slave, who under great severity, had fled from the worst of masters to the best.---I mean he had sought rest in the bosom of *Jesus Christ*, the common friend of the weary and heavy laden.---This man was so impressed with a sense of the benefits he had derived from his afflictions, that lying on his death-bed, and seeing his master standing by, he eagerly caught the hands of his oppressor, and kissing them, said, *'these hands have brought me to heaven.'*

In dark and perplexing cases, study the histories of *Jacob, Joseph, Nebemiah, Daniel*, and

* Rom. viii. 28.

other eminent characters who lived in difficult services ; and learn from them to trust, where you cannot trace the designs of providence.--- If at any time you are discouraged in your endeavours to please man, look to God ;---He will accept the feeblest service done for his sake :--- He is easy to be pleased, though man is not.--- He rends the rocks, but will not *break a bruised reed** : He *inhabits eternity*, and he dwells also in the *humble and contrite heart* †.

A Christian servant considers his work as appointed of God, though delivered to him by the hand of man ; he is, therefore, found serving God, in his worldly service ;---performing it, not only as in his sight, but also as his *will* : and this softens his yoke, and removes the mistake of his service being a meanness or a drudgery ; since he knows that it is both the honour and the joy of Angels to do their Lord's will, whether it be to crush an immense army, like *Sennacherib's* ‡, or to wait upon a poor prisoner like *Peter* ||.

* Isa. xlii. 3.

† Isa. lvii. 15.

‡ 2 Kings xix. 35.

|| Acts xii. 7.

One of the wisest of the ancient Philosophers, (who nevertheless lived and died in service) observes, that "here, as in a Theatre, every one
 " of us has his proper part allotted to him, nor
 " should we regard who is appointed to act
 " the prince, or who the beggar; who the
 " master, or who the servant; but who shall
 " perform his own part best."---And a wiser
 than he exhorts, '*Art thou called being a ser-*
'vant? care not for it;' (that is, it is a small
 and momentary consideration to one who has
 such views and hopes as a Christian) '*for he*
'that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is
'the Lord's freeman.'*

It is also such a servant's comfort to know, that whatever part or service he is appointed to perform, and whatever present discouragements he meets, his *labour shall not be in vain in the Lord*†.---He is a master who may raise vast expectations in the hearts of his servants, but he cannot *disappoint* the least.---The dying reflection of a servant of one of our English Kings, is full of instruction to us all in this re-

* 1 Cor. vii. 21, 22.

† 1 Cor. xv. 58.

other eminent characters who lived in difficult services ; and learn from them to trust, where you cannot trace the designs of providence.--- If at any time you are discouraged in your endeavours to please man, look to God ;---He will accept the feeblest service done for his sake :--- He is easy to be pleased, though man is not.--- He rends the rocks, but will not *break a bruised reed** : He *inhabits eternity*, and he dwells also in the *humble and contrite heart*†.

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 “ the prince, or who the beggar; who the
 “ master, or who the servant; but who shall
 “ perform his own part best.”---And a wiser than he exhorts, ‘ *Art thou called being a servant? care not for it;*’ (that is, it is a small and momentary consideration to one who has such views and hopes as a Christian) ‘ *for he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord’s freeman* *.’

It is also such a servant’s comfort to know, that whatever part or service he is appointed to perform, and whatever present discouragements he meets, his *labour shall not be in vain in the Lord* †.---He is a master who may raise vast expectations in the hearts of his servants, but he cannot *disappoint* the least.---The dying reflection of a servant of one of our English Kings, is full of instruction to us all in this re-

* 1 Cor. vii. 21, 22.

† 1 Cor. xv. 58.

spect ;---stript in his old age of that honour and wealth to which he had been raised ; and to which few subjects ever attained, he justly exclaimed, "*Had I but served my GOD as faithfully as I have served my master, HE would not have forsaken me in my grey hairs !*"

CHAP. VIII.

Discretion.

SHOULD it be your lot to dwell where disorder and profaneness prevail, and where your serious views and conscientious regard to God and his word may be scorned ; be in nothing *terrified by your adversaries : which is to them an evident token of perdition ; but to you of salvation, and that of God.* For to you it is given in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake*.

* Phil. i. 28, 29.

Endeavour also to derive instruction even from such scenes as these, (for every place is a school to the wise); observe how every thing proves the value of religion:---see how man sinks into ruin and wretchedness as he forsakes his God:---observe in what a variety of ways the corruption of nature breaks out, particularly in the tongue, *that world of iniquity* * ; mark how vile a slavery sin is; and how degraded a character every man becomes who lives under its dominion.---Forgetting God (like the Prodigal), he forgets himself; wanders on, committing outrages against every thing sacred and serious. Observe also that these very outrages (like the ravings of a poor lunatic against his friends and his remedies) shew, not only the pitiful condition in which he lies; but may serve also to remind you of the value of that relief and cure which the gospel affords---a remedy which the unhappy scoffer so much despises, and so much needs.---You know that it would bring him back to a

* James iii. 6.

Father ; *you* feel that it would bring him to himself.

Need I add here, that such a wretched state of things is a constant occasion of gratitude to a Christian for his own deliverance ; and should teach him continually to cry, ‘ *what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits* * ? and ‘ how shall I best recommend these benefits to ‘ others ? ’ --- On this subject permit me to drop a few hints.

In whatever circumstances you live, endeavour to do all the good you can with the least harm ; and to this end, be careful that the face of your profession be as sober and aimable as possible ; *walking in wisdom towards them that are without* † ; or as the Psalmist expresses it, *I will behave myself WISELY in a perfect way* ‡. There is a crude or unripe sort of piety, which, indeed ought not to be mistaken for hypocrisy, but is so like it, that the mistake is easily made.

The following account given me by one whom, from the frankness of his acknowledg-

* Ps. cxvi. 12.

† Col. iv. 5.

‡ Ps. ci. 2.

ments, I ought to call HONESTUS, will sufficiently explain what I mean.

‘ Though, at my first setting out in religion,’ said he, ‘ I was sincere in the main, I was yet so enthusiastic and conceited, so harsh and untractable, that my most candid acquaintance scarcely knew what to make of me.--- I mistook a stiff and whimsical singularity for Christian simplicity; little suspecting the temper which lurked under it.---When I had been rude, I called it faithfulness; and when I suffered for my rashness or imprudence, I supposed it was for righteousness sake:--- other Christians met persecution, but I invited it:---others left the world, but I quarrelled with it.---So little did I consider the time and place for serious things, and introduced them in so strange and improper a way, that when I tried to make my friends serious, I often provoked them to smile.’

‘ These mistakes,’ said he, ‘ while they took away all weight from my character, occasioned disgust at other things in me, which were scriptural and praise-worthy, and made me rather a hindrance to the cause of religion

‘ than a help.---For while I justly lamented
 ‘ the errors of those I lived with, I forgot that
 ‘ I, in some measure, promoted the very errors
 ‘ I lamented ;---I considered not that for want
 ‘ of mixing *good sense* with *good things*, I my-
 ‘ self became a sort of argument for their va-
 ‘ nity and extravagance.---Were they checked
 ‘ at any time on these accounts, they immedi-
 ‘ ately cried, “ What ! would you advise us
 ‘ to imitate HONESTUS ? ”

Those who have the cause of true religion
 at heart, cannot but be grieved when they see
 it thus misrepresented ; and that, not only by
 designing hypocrites, but by men, who like
 HONESTUS really mean well.---Christianity is
 indeed plain, but not rude ; simple, but not ab-
 surd ; mortified but not morose. If the Chris-
 tian is a *pilgrim and a stranger upon earth* *,
 he is also (like Abraham among the sons of
 Heth †), to be a wise and an amiable stranger.
 ---He should be too simple to fall into affecta-
 tion ; too real a character, to act a part ; and
 too well acquainted with the evil of offences ‡,

* Heb. xi. 13.

† Gen. xxiii.

‡ Matt. xviii 17.

to raise them unnecessarily. In a word, *he is not to be as the hypocrites, who disfigure their faces* *, nor as those fanatics, who by setting up one truth against another, disfigure the Gospel. ---It is, as the Apostle speaks, *by manifestation of the truth*, (that is the whole truth, practical as well as doctrinal) that we *commend ourselves and our religion to every man's conscience in the sight of God* †.

Above all, when you treat of religious subjects, avoid passionate or rude expressions, not only because they are a disgrace to your profession, but also because they will defeat your very design, *for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God* ‡.

Whenever you are called to give an account of your religious profession, or of any particular step which you are obliged to take for conscience sake ; endeavour to commend yourself to the conscience of the enquirer ; especially by the manner of your reply.---The scripture, which teaches us to be ready to answer such

* Matt. vi. 16. † 2 Cor. iv. 2. ‡ James i. 20.

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 ‘ the errors of those I lived with, I forgot that
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* Matt. vi. 16. † 2 Cor. iv. 2. ‡ James i. 20.

enquiries, charges us also to do it with *meekness and fear* *.

ELIZA found she could be spared at no time on the Sunday to attend the public worship of God, and therefore felt it her duty to seek another place.---The lady she lived with, questioned her about this step ; ELIZA was humble, and naturally backward to speak, but being pressed to open her mind, she plainly stated what she felt : such as her regard to God's command---the benefit she had found in attending his house---the value of the soul---the awful approach of eternity---and the shortness and uncertainty of the time allotted her to prepare for it.---She mentioned also "the exceeding great love of her master and only Saviour Jesus Christ in dying for her, and the innumerable benefits obtained thereby."

But what more particularly leads me to mention this case, is the Christian-like spirit with which her zeal was attended.

'You seem to be very sincere,' said the lady, 'and I cannot but respect your piety ; but

* 1 Pet. iii. 15.

‘on many accounts, I should not chuse to alter the rules of my family.’

‘Madam,’ replied ELIZA, ‘though I am obliged to leave you, I hope I shall never forget the many kindnesses I have received. In many things you have treated me more like a mother, than like a mistress. I can truly say that your favour is more to me, than any, except God’s.---But He tells me that I have a soul which must be saved or lost for ever : I find I cannot live without hope, and I can have no hope but in his ways.---May He abundantly bless you and your family, while I trust him to provide for me.’

As I have been speaking throughout this chapter to such only as make a serious profession, I hope that what has been said will be sufficiently plain to them.

And may the mistakes I have mentioned, and many others which I have not room to notice, be far removed from your character, my Christian friends ! Instead of such doubtful appearances, *do all things without murmuring and disputings : that ye may be blameless and harmless as the sons of God, without rebuke, in the*

midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom I pray earnestly that ye may shine as lights in the world.*

CHAP. IX.

Suitable Scriptures.

TO assist you as Christian servants in the noblest of all aims, I shall, in this chapter, collect together those passages of scripture which were written for your particular use. You will have them here in one view, and at hand; and I wish you to get them by heart, as infallible rules for your conduct and comfort. It will be profitable also for you often to reflect upon them as part of the very profession you make among men.

It is as if you said to the rest of mankind, *choose ye whom ye will serve* : but as for us, we are the followers of one who, to the greatest promises hath connected the following commands, and which, as his disciples, we receive as our

* Phil. ii. 14, 15.

rules of action.---*Servants be obedient to them that are your Masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling ; in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ : not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ ; doing the will of God from the heart ; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men : knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. Eph. vi. 5---8.*

Again, let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own Masters worthy of all honour ; that the name of God, and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing Masters, let them not despise them, (or pay them less respect) because they are brethren ; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit : these things teach and exhort.

A high expectation in entering the house, even of a *believing Master*, is often the forerunner of disappointment : and a high spirit will not only disorder any house, but afterward vent itself in complaints, and multiply scandals.

MARTHA called upon me in trouble; and out of place; and I could plainly perceive, even from her own account, how much her troubles arose from her misconduct.---She had hastily left a former service (where she enjoyed every reasonable privilege), in order to enter the house of a wealthy citizen, where her own religious views were embraced.---MARTHA had newly taken up a profession of religion, but had not learned much more than half her lesson.---She needed the advice given in pages 9. and 10. about changing places: and though she was zealous for some scriptures, she had overlooked others, particularly such as I am collecting in this chapter.

MARTHA had, indeed, read that, if any seem to be religious, and *bridle not his tongue*, such a man's *religion is vain**; yet the defects she saw in the family (and what family is free from defects?) she scrupled not to censure both at home and abroad.---Instead of charitably covering, or patiently healing any disorder, she thoughtlessly inflamed it: and where humility would have been silent, or where tender-

* James i. 26.

ness would have contrived an apology, she was too ready to accuse, and eager to relate.---She expected many allowances in such a house, but made few ; with great imperfections herself, she wondered to find them in others ; and while she complained that the gospel was not more adorned in a professing family, she forgot that one of its chief ornaments is *a meek and quiet spirit*.

Did MARTHA *mean*, that the “ name of God “ and his doctrine should be blasphemed” by all this ?---Certainly not.---But why did she not consider to what such a conduct as her’s must lead ?

I would fain hope that this character is not very common, but knowing that it really exists, I could not but point out the evil of it. Is MARTHA, after all, a Christian ?---Many will doubt it :---it would be well if she doubted it herself :---certain it is, that if she be one, the farther she advances in Christianity, the more bitterly will she lament her present mistakes.

Let us return again to the words of the Apostle, recollecting what he adds to those last quot-

ed, *If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to Godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing.*
 1 Tim. vi. 1---4.

Exhort servants to be obedient to their own Masters, and to please them well in all things : not answering again, not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Tit. ii. 9, 10,

If others say, ‘ I am disposed to act well, ‘ when I am treated well,’ a *Christian* should recollect, that the conduct above mentioned is enjoined, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience sake toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.---For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults ye shall take it patiently ? but, if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God : for even hereunto were ye called.
 1 Pet. ii. 18---21.

Bear with me then, my Christian friends, while in love I warn you to reflect, that if, instead of regarding this your profession, any one of you should leave the parlour with murmurs : ---if he should enter among his fellow-servants with angry and reproachful expressions when his will is crossed, or his conduct blamed : ---if he should slight the family worship because it may not be conducted exactly to his taste : ---if he should make light of a stated agreement or contract, or forget that the inordinate *love of money is the root of all evil* *, and prepares the heart for every thing that is mean and false : ---if he should be found wasting, or making away with that which is entrusted to his care, and employing a secrecy in it which proves the guilt : ---in a word, if he should not be distinguished from other servants by his regard to the scriptural rules I have just mentioned, upon what ground are they to take him for a Christian? and how is the doctrine of God our Saviour to be adorned or recommended by him?

* 1 Tim. vi. 10.

I affectionately intreat you also to reflect, how awful the case, if any of you should thus become their stumbling block!--or lead them to suppose that Christianity is rather a name or notion that puffs up its possessors, than that holy religion which the scriptures describe!--I say, reflect how awful it is, for a Christian professor thus to become a witness against Christianity; and an assistant to *the god of this world in blinding the minds of them that believe not* *.

Here methinks I hear a sincere lover of the truth say, ‘ I see more clearly the nature of
 ‘ my calling than I once did; and I feel that I
 ‘ also have made mistakes by not keeping my
 ‘ eye more strictly upon scripture rules.---I
 ‘ perceive I shall do nothing right, but as I set
 ‘ *the Lord always before me* †, *doing service un-*
 ‘ *to Him, and not merely to man*; and looking
 ‘ unto Him for that which I am to receive.---I
 ‘ plainly see that many things, which others allow
 ‘ themselves in, are quite contrary to my pro-
 ‘ fession.---If they are not faithful in the small-
 ‘ est things,---if they are disposed to please on-
 ‘ ly when they are pleased,---I am called to

* Pf. xvi. 8.

† 2 Cor. iv. 4.

' follow and imitate my heavenly Master, tak-
 ' ing up his cross, and suffering patiently, though
 ' it be wrongfully, as he did before me.---It is
 ' but a little while that I can either suffer or
 ' serve,---a little while and a poor servant shall
 ' reign with Christ.---Let me then seek to glo-
 ' rify Him more in my appointed station, and
 ' only opportunity. And may my coming so
 ' short, even in my best endeavours, lead me to
 ' rely more simply and entirely on his merits
 ' and mediation *who took upon him the form of*
 ' *a servant* ; by whose obedience alone many
 ' are made *righteous*, and by whose poverty
 ' alone any can become *rich*.'

Let me encourage such a true disciple of
 Christ by considering what a testimony such a
 conduct, as the scriptures above mentioned re-
 commend, must leave in every family where it
 is really found.---Men often laugh and scoff at
 a Christian, when their consciences are secretly
 pierced with the truth of his profession: They
 are more goaded by truth than they chuse to
 confess.---Few, indeed, are so hardened in ig-
 norance and sin, but at one time or other, they
 are ready to cry, ' *Let me die the death of the*

‘ *righteous ! Let my last end be like his* !*’
 Nor is any station so low and contracted, nor
 any prospects so unpromising, as to forbid us
 to hope for success by a *patient continuance in*
well doing †. For God who works by instru-
 ments, often glorifies his power by employing
 such as men despise ; and when HE pleases to
 work by such, nothing can prevent the execu-
 tion of his design.

NAAMAN, *Captain of the host of the King of*
Syria, was a great man with his master, but
he was a leper. And the Syrians had gone out
by companies, and had brought away captive out
of the land of Israel a little maid, and she waited
on Naaman's wife : and she said unto her mistress,
‘ Would to God my Lord were with the pro-
phet that is in Samaria ! for he would reco-
ver him of his leprosy ‡.’

Now, from the simple report of this little
 captive, what surprising consequences follow-
 ed !---The report is carried to her Lord :---
 the king of *Syria* sends in behalf of his favour-
 ite officer to the king of *Israel* ; and Naaman

* Num. xxiii. 10.

† Rom. ii. 7.

‡ 2 Kings v. 1---3.

goes to the prophet.---He is first led (and that by one of his *servants*) to cease from his reasonings on a divine appointment:---he then submits to it:---he receives health:---he acknowledges the true God:---he gives him glory; and becomes a monument to all generations of the mighty effects which that God sometimes pleases to produce by a *servant's* report.

Let me add here, that I have found Naaman to be not the only leper recovered by such a report.---I have known a more desperate leprosy than his, healed in a similar way.---I have seen, among other instances I could name, one of the most abandoned youths I ever knew, induced, by the patient example and affectionate persuasion of his father's servant, to turn his eyes to the *Fountain opened for sin* * in the gospel:---a man whom the youth had before long scorned and insulted, only because, like Cain, *his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous* †.

Fear nothing therefore, standing in your appointed station, and in a right spirit; nor, on

* Zech. xiii. 1.

† 1 John iii. 12.

any account, let *thine heart envy sinners*, in their momentary blaze: *but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long; for surely there is an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off**.

---The highest and happiest ambition of a rational creature is to stand waiting for that commendation, '*Well done, thou good and faithful servant! thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the JOY OF THY LORD*†.'

CHAP. X.

The Irreligious addressed.

AS a Minister and Friend, I must not forget those servants who, though of very different descriptions, are yet, at present, destitute of true religion:---that religion, the principles and spirit of which I have stated, and the disciples of which I have described. Such may have read this address thus far, and ought

* Prov. xxiii. 17, 18.

† Mat. xxv. 21.

by no means to find it concluded, without a special regard to their case :---a case, indeed, which their Minister cannot but regard with the tenderest compassion, and therefore here adds a few reflections for their particular consideration and use.---Blessed be God our religion not only commands us to love those who differ from us, but it *influences* us to do it.

And such I would affectionately entreat to examine, whether what shall be here addressed be not the plain declarations of God's holy word, quite apart from matters of private opinion, or doubtful disputation.---All I wish for, is to call your attention to your Bible ;---to bring forward what God has so repeatedly said, and what your heart and mine too, is so unhappily disposed to forget.

Let me also intreat you to be wise in *time* ; for the greater part of mankind are cut off, before they begin to think seriously :---*they die without wisdom* *, because they die without taking *warning*.---Like that Senator, who as he went to the assembly, had an account put into

* Job iv. 21.

his hand by some friend, of a conspiracy formed against his life : he was, however, too much engaged to attend to it, and therefore put it, for the present, into his pocket.---He intended to read it the first opportunity, but was stabbed before that opportunity came.

It is under such an anxiety that I now put this paper into your hand. There is, indeed a conspiracy formed against your life ; yea, against the dearest part of man, your soul ; which is very soon to enter an assembly composed of *all nations, tongues, and people*, standing before God the Judge of all.---In the way an *Adversary* * lies in wait to give a fatal stab to its everlasting happiness ; sin poisons the dagger in his hand ; and a careless unbelieving state of mind affords him opportunity :---In such circumstances, shall I scruple to warn you in the plainest terms ?---God forbid !---My silence would hazard my own safety. I cannot forget what was once said to a minister, ‘ *If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood shall I require at thine hand* †.’

* 1 Pet. v. 8.

† Ezek. xxxiii. 8.

The interests, therefore, of your soul are your dearest interests. You will forget the loss of all other things, but this loss will be irreparable: in losing this, all will be lost. *For what shall it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul*?*

Presumptuous minds, *blinded by the god of this world*†, may, indeed, seek to overwhelm every consideration of this kind with scoffs and ribaldry, and try to harden themselves and others against the evil day, by the worst of all hopes, namely, *that God is not to be believed*. But this desperate conduct can make no alteration whatever as to the things despised; the awful FACTS remain:---Time flies apace;---Eternity approaches, whether we prepare for it or not;---and *God is not a man, that he should lie; nor the son of man that he should repent*‡. He hath declared his purpose: He hath warned us of our danger: He hath pointed out our remedy: it is his perfection that He cannot change, or deny himself; and there-

* Mark viii. 36, 37. † 2 Cor. iv. 4. ‡ Num. xxiii. 19.

fore, he calls upon us to change; that is, to *turn to him and live* *.

Such as think to avoid a danger by turning their eyes from it, have been well compared to that silly bird, who, when closely pursued, thrusts his head into the sand or a thicket; and, because he does not see his pursuers, vainly hopes that they have lost sight of him.

But *Wisdom crieth without, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorner delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my Reproof* †.---Our wisdom then consists, not in shutting our eyes against a danger, but in opening them to discover a refuge.---Not in refusing to hear the charge brought against sin, saying with the wicked, ‘*Tush, thou God carest not for it;*’ but in humbly confessing the evil;---submitting to HIS account of it;---and embracing the remedy HE hath provided against it. For all attempts to conceal or excuse this evil are as vain, as they are presumptuous: it meets us in the Scriptures; in the History of every age;

* Ezek. xviii. 32.

† Prov. i. 20.---23.

in the scenes of every day ; and in our own Consciences, if they are not blind or feared.

Man indeed, may chuse to make light of his guilt, but he should recollect that he is not to be the JUDGE.---A Criminal may plead for mercy ; much more may he embrace it in any way it is offered : but in what Court is he allowed to *decide upon his DESERTS* ?

How the Governor of the universe ought to punish sin, and what a government of infinite perfection, like his, requires, we (insects as we are before Him) can form no right notions of.---It is folly, and presumption of the worst kind, when *we* attempt to determine what he ought to do.---There is but one way left for wisdom to chuse ; namely, where we cannot guide ourselves, to accept of an infallible Guide ; and what it is impossible we should know without God, to come and learn of God. When we look around us, and can see no other assurance of safety---no other probable resting-place for the sole of our foot ; surely it is our wisdom then, to prepare for the worst that can possibly happen, and to come and rest on that

foundation which he has laid in a REDEEMER *.

Surely, I say again, if any conduct deserves to be called wise, it must be that which shuns the danger HE points out, and embraces a method of safety which HE recommends ; nor can folly itself be more foolish, than to plan, not only without his counsel, but *against* it.

But what is this counsel?---(for I am labouring to persuade you to abide by none but his) ---What hath he said to every one of us?---Is it not that *he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness* †?---that we should stand *ready* to meet that day, because it cometh when least expected ‡ ; and, that *it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in that day, than for those who have lived under greater advantages and neglected them* || ?

He who is as a man *taking a far journey*, and hath committed *to every one his work* §, speaks of a servant who *should say in his heart*, ‘ my

* Rom. ix. 33. † Acts xvii. 31. ‡ Mat. xxiv. 44.

|| Mark vi. 11.

§ Mark xiii. 34.

Lord delayeth his coming, and accordingly pursues his evil course, equally regardless of God or man: but what is the consequence? *The Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers* *.

He farther assures us, that it is not enough that we have not been riotous or injurious, like the servant above :---He informs us, that we have each a talent to improve, which you will find described at large in Matt. xxv.---You will there see another servant (which is every careless sinner) coming and declaring that, after entertaining hard thoughts of his master's requirements, he had gone, in a sort of despair, and *hid his Lord's talent in the earth*; '*Lo there,*' says he, '*thou hast that is thine!*' What followed this wretched excuse, and what became of him whom our Lord calls a *wicked and slothful servant*, I (who would fain secure you from this end) intreat you to read; and, with it, that very awful, but instructive ac-

* Luke xii. 45, 46.

count of the great day which immediately follows it.

To listen, then, as this servant did, to our own vain thoughts, or to those of our unbelieving companions, instead of attending to these gracious warnings of our Lord, is certainly one of the most desperate delusions that ever entered the human heart.---‘ *I shall do as well as others,*’ says a thoughtless creature ; but should he not first learn from the Judge of the whole earth what others are doing ?---Should he embark soul and body on the ocean of eternity upon such a presumption as this ? (a sort of presumption upon which he would scarcely risk a shilling of his property), and especially, after being expressly charged, not by his Minister only, but by his SAVIOUR, to ‘ *strive to enter in at the strait gate* * : and assured that *broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat :*’ but that ‘ *narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it* † ?’

† Luke xiii. 24.

† Mat. vi. 13, 14.

To rescue you, therefore, from a *world which lieth in wickedness* * ;---to prevent your committing a mistake for which no remedy is provided in eternity ;---and to awaken you to the pursuit of eternal life before the *night cometh, when no man can work* † ; I have brought forward these scriptures : and add my fervent prayers, that they may be accompanied with a divine blessing to your heart.

CHAP. XI.

The inconsiderate warned.

A PIOUS writer of the last Century has some remarks so applicable to what has just been said, that I shall select and abridge a passage or two for your use.

“ Some,” says he, “ are so carried away by
 “ the stream of evil company, that when one
 “ and another is cut off, it does not daunt them,
 “ because they see not whither their compa-
 “ nions are gone.---Little do they think how

* 1 John v. 19.

† John ix. 4.

“ such are now lamenting the madness of a
 “ careless state.---In Luke xvi. the rich man in
 “ hell would fain have had one sent to warn his
 “ five brethren, lest they should come to that
 “ place of torment.---Probably, he knew their
 “ minds and lives, and knew that they were
 “ hastening thither, little supposing that he was
 “ there.

“ I remember being told of a man who was
 “ driving a flock of lambs upon a bridge over
 “ the *Severn* : and something hindering their
 “ passage, one of the lambs leaped upon the
 “ wall of the bridge, and fell into the stream :
 “ the rest seeing him, one after another leaped
 “ also over, and were drowned. Those that
 “ were behind little suspected what became of
 “ them which were gone before, but thought
 “ they might venture to follow their compa-
 “ nions.---Even so it is with unconverted men ;
 “ one dieth by them, and falls into destruction,
 “ and another follows ; and yet they pursue
 “ the same course, not considering where their
 “ companions are gone : but when death hath
 “ once opened their eyes, and they see what is

“ on the other side of the wall,---what would
 “ they give to return !”

“ Moreover,” continues he, “ they have a
 “ crafty and malicious enemy, whose principal
 “ business is to prevent their conversion, and
 “ keep them quiet and secure *. And this he
 “ attempts, by persuading them to disbelieve
 “ the scriptures, or not to trouble their minds
 “ with such matters, or by persuading them to
 “ think ill of a godly life : and that they may be
 “ saved without conversion ; and that there is
 “ no need of all this stir and anxiety about it.
 “ He will tell them that God is so merciful
 “ that there is no danger ; at least that they
 “ may stay a little longer, and take their plea-
 “ sure and follow the world at present, and re-
 “ pent hereafter.---By such delusions as these,
 “ *Satan* keeps them captives, and leads them
 “ to ruin.”

But consider, I pray you, what means this
 repentance *hereafter*, that so many are thus de-
 luded with ?---Can they repent at any time
 without the grace of God ?---Are they likely to
 obtain that grace, who continue to neglect and

* Luke xi. 21.

despise it?---My concern for your safety obliges me to add, that nothing can be more express than the declaration of our Judge, that there is a time approaching in which those who have *set at nought his counsel, shall, indeed, call, but receive no answer**.---O how many of them that are lost, once vainly resolved to repent *hereafter* !

If, therefore, *fools make a mock at sin* †, and if, more *foolish* still, they despise their only remedy, turn from them to the voice of wisdom and of God, in Proverbs, ch. i. for there you will see expressly described, both the *Character* and the *End* of such men.

CHAP. XII.

A Minister's Aim.

SUCH scriptures as have been mentioned, it is 'confessed, have a tendency to disturb and wound those who live in a careless and unconverted state : they were, indeed, written

* Prov. i. 28.

† Prov. xiv. 8.

with this very design ; let such, however, recollect that *faithful are the wounds of a Friend* *.

When your body is disordered, you send for a physician or surgeon, and willingly submit to whatever he prescribes ; you depend upon his skill and integrity through, perhaps, a tedious and painful operation, if, peradventure, you may at length regain your health.---But what is the health of a dying body compared with the salvation of an immortal soul ? Or who is that earthly physician, that may be trusted like the heavenly one, whose advice we have heard ?

Much more pleasant is a Minister's work, in healing a broken heart, than in breaking a hard one.---To warn you of your danger, is, indeed, our *duty*, but to congratulate you on your safety would be our *joy*.---We join the angels in rejoicing over a returning sinner ; and as we see you united to the flock of Christ, we are ready to cry, with the Apostle, ‘ *What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing ? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming ? for ye are our glory and joy* †.’

* Prov. xxvii. 16.

† 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.

With what pleasure was that letter written (though written in bonds) which was sent by a Servant returning like a new creature to his Master?---“ *I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds ; which in time past was to thee unprofitable ; but now profitable to thee, and to me. Whom I have sent again ; thou, therefore, receive him ; that is mine own bowels.---He, perhaps, departed for a season, that thou shouldst receive him for ever :---as a brother beloved ;---receive him as myself.*”

You see plainly here, for what a Minister labours, and what is the proper effect of the Gospel ; and may He, who to meet our deep necessities, came down, and *took upon him the form of a servant* †, and sends by whom, and in what way he will, give success to my endeavours for your benefit ! That receiving yourself the inestimable blessing of a saving conversion to God, you may become a blessing to every family you live with.---Let your prayers be united with mine to this end---and be not

* Philem. 10---17.

† Phil. ii. 7.

discouraged because you cannot pray as you would.---Pray as you can.---God looketh not at the expression, but at the heart; and hath declared that *he is nigh unto all them that call upon him* *.---The scriptures you read will furnish you with both matter and language for prayer, an example of which I shall leave you at the conclusion.

If convinced of your sad state in having wandered from the best of Fathers, and if tired like the prodigal, of its slavery, you are desirous to return, remember how graciously our Lord invites *all that labour and are heavy laden*, to come unto him for rest †; declaring that he will *in no wise cast out him that comes* ‡, that his blood shall cleanse such from the guilt of sin, and his Spirit deliver them from the power of it, and that he will freely give his *holy Spirit to them that ask him* ||.

As his servants and witnesses upon earth, we are bound to declare these truths, and to declare them with firmness on the authority of his *Word*:---we can speak of them also from our

* Pl. cxlv. 18.

† Matt. xi. 28.

‡ John vi. 37.

|| Luke xi. 13.

own experience,---we have been in your condition---we were convinced of our danger---we advanced upon the credit of his truth:---our prospects brightened as we advanced---and the more we know of religion and its Author, the more we feel and admire its evidence and importance:---can we then help adopting the words of the apostle (though in a humbler sense) ‘ *That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us ; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ : and these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full*.*’

It is in advancing, that you may expect the same increasing conviction ; for a Christian’s evidence grows with his experience.---*He that believeth on the son of God, hath the witness in himself† ;* and in his time and measure shall be enabled to resist every temptation to apostacy with the holy confidence of that faithful servant‡,

* 1 John i. 3, 4.

† 1 John v. 10.

‡ Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, supposed to have been a disciple of St John, and the person meant by the Angel of the Church in Smyrna, Rev. ii. 8.---He suffered about the year 167.

who, when urged to save his life by reviling his Master, replied, “ *Eighty and six years have I served CHRIST, and never received any thing but kindness from him : how then can I now blaspheme my KING and my SAVIOUR ?* ”

A PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY God, who dwellest in the high and holy place, with him also that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at thy word : mercifully attend to the cry of a lost sinner, who desires to approach thee in the name and mediation of thy son Jesus Christ.

I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, for I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight :---God be merciful to me a sinner !

But who is a God like unto thee, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin !---Thou delightest in mercy : Thou hast often called, when I have refused : Thou now criest in my heart, ‘ turn ye, for why will ye die ? ’ Turn thou me, O Lord, and I shall be turned ; heal me, and I

*shall be healed ; say unto my soul, ' I am thy
' salvation.'*

Glory to thy holy name, that when I forgot thee thou didst remember me, and still saidst, *' seek ye my face ;'* pour upon me now thy promised *Spirit of grace and supplication*, and incline my heart to reply, *thy face, Lord, will I seek !* Yea, *I will seek thee with my whole heart ; for blessed is the man whom thou chooseth, and causeth to approach unto thee. Remember me, therefore, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people : O visit me with thy salvation : that I may see the good of thy chosen.*

Let the *Spirit of truth lead me into all truth :* and so open the eyes of my understanding, that I may savingly understand the scriptures ; and find that *Wisdom which giveth life to them that have it.*

And since thou hast given eternal life so freely, and declared this life to be only in thy SON : grant that I may not be of *them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul :* that my trust may be alone in the Lord, my Redeemer : yea, *God forbid*

that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ! Give me Rest through his labour; Health from his wounds; and Life by his death.

Grant also, O my heavenly Father, that I may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power in them that believe. Let thy Spirit be a living spring in my heart, *springing up unto everlasting life.* Make me a living branch in the true vine, that I may bring forth much fruit to thy glory. May I feel the Joy of the Lord to be my strength; and find in every trial, his grace sufficient for me.

O that thou wouldst bless me indeed, in sending these thy promised mercies! and *that thine hand may be with me* in my station, *keeping me from the evils* and temptations which attend it. Bless me and make me a blessing to those I serve, to those that serve with me, and to all my relations.

As a servant enable me to walk before thee; acting *as in thy sight*; and in serving Thee, while I serve those thou hast placed over me. Bless, O Lord, the family in which I live, and

help me to walk also before them with *all humility of mind ; with truth and soberness ; diligence and patience : doing to others as I would they should do unto me*, that I may adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things.

As a poor pilgrim, travelling from time to eternity, help me to walk by faith, and not by sight. *As my day is, let my strength be : shew me the path wherein I should walk, for I lift up my soul unto thee, and hold thou me up in it, and I shall be safe.*

As a helpless and dying worm, to whom should I go but unto thee ? *Thou hast the words of eternal life ; Thou hast promised all I want ; nor can I let thee go, except thou blest me.*

Graciously protect me while I live ; support me when I come to die ; save, O save me from the worm that never dieth ! and bring me through the merits of my Redeemer, to that rest which remaineth for the people of God.

In his name, and for his sake alone, I ask these mercies, to whom, with Thyself, and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*



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